AV695
.Jc. M
1932-1933

Legal representation Los Angeles co, Calif.

ANNUAL REPORT OF PUBLIC DEFENDER OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Fiscal year July 1, 1932 to July 1, 1933.

- - - - - -

The Public Defender, during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1933, handled 2570 criminal cases, 28 insanity cases and 10 contempt cases. The Public Defender represented the defendant in 55.7% of all cases filed by the District Attorney in the Superior Court during the last fiscal year.

CRIMINAL CASES

Cases in which appearances were made in Court.

Total number of court appearances in Superior Court - - - -		7659
Total number of defendants represented - - - - - - - - - - -		2459
Cases undisposed of July 1, 1931, and finally disposed of during last fiscal year - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	162	
Felony cases, Superior Court - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	2053	
Contributing cases in Superior Court, Misdemeanors - -	130	
Insanity cases, Superior Court - - - - - - - - - - - - -	28	
Contempt cases, Superior Court - - - - - - - - - - - - -	10	
		2383

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations in office and County Jail (cases in which appearances were not made in court) - - - - - -	225	
Total		2608

TRIALS IN CRIMINAL CASES

Total number of trials set during year - - - - - - - -		1205
Trials eliminated by changing pleas of not guilty to guilty -	637	
Cases disposed of by being dismissed - - - - - - - - - -	160	
Cases disposed of by being stricken from calendar - -	26	
Cases actually tried - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	382	
		1205

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
LIBRARY
117 LIBRARY BUILDING

RESULTS OF TRIALS

Verdicts of guilty	210	
Verdicts of guilty less offense	18	
Verdicts not guilty	121	
Jury disagreements	14	
Verdicts sane- criminal insanity trials	5	
Verdicts insane - criminal insanity trials	14	
		382

CIVIL INSANITY TRIALS

Verdicts sane	6	
Verdicts insane	22	
		28
Total number of trials completed		410

SUPERIOR COURT PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

CONTRIBUTING CASES.

Total preliminary examinations		97
Defendants held to answer to Superior Courts	92	
Defendants discharged and cases dismissed	5	
		97

MISCELLANEOUS DISPOSITIONS

PLEAS OF GUILTY

Pleas of guilty to offense charged	1351	
Pleas of guilty of less offense than charged	78	
Total		1429

PROBATION ORDERS

Defendants granted probation without jail sentence	239	
Defendants granted probation with jail sentence	462	
Defendants denied probation	248	
Total		949

SENTENCES AND FINES

Defendants sentenced to death	1
Defendants sentenced to San Quentin	507
Defendants sentenced to Folsom	112
Defendants committed to Preston School (Ione)	98
Defendants committed to Ventura (Girls)	3
Defendants sentenced to County Jail	343
Defendants fined	192
	1256

DEFENDANTS COMMITTED TO STATE HOSPITALS

Defendants committed to State Hospitals as insane	14
Defendants committed to Spadra (Narcotic)	1
	15

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Motions for new trial granted	5
Motions for new trial denied	24
	29
Demurrers sustained	3
Demurrers overruled	0
	3
Cases pending and undisposed of	215

PUBLIC DEFENDER SAVES EXPENSE TO COUNTY

The Public Defender saved the County of Los Angeles at least four times the cost of operating the office during the last fiscal year by the manner in which the defense of persons accused of crime was conducted. Unnecessary loss of time was eliminated without sacrificing the interests of the accused. Pleas of guilty were encouraged where the defendant was obviously guilty. Unnecessary and costly trials were avoided whenever it was possible to do so. The time consumed in the trial of cases was shortened by eliminating the dilatory and procrastinating tactics sometimes engaged in by attorneys representing defendants. Many specific cases wherein a

great saving of time and expense was effected could be mentioned but it does not seem opportune to include them in this report.

ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF MONEY SAVED THE COUNTY

During the last fiscal year the Public Defender handled 2,345 criminal cases in the Superior Court. Of these 1205 were set for trial but only 382 cases were actually tried. 825 cases were disposed of without trial. 637 of said trials were disposed of by changing the pleas of defendants from not guilty to guilty. Dismissals were made in 160 cases because it would not have been advantageous to try them and 26 cases were stricken from the calendar. In each of said cases the rights of the defendant were, under the law, fully protected and accorded to him.

But for the work of the Public Defender we are of the opinion that at least 700 of said cases would have been tried. If said 700 cases had gone to trial it would have required five more Superior Courts, assigned to the trial of criminal cases than are now handling such cases, functioning full time, to have tried said cases.

In round figures, it costs the county of Los Angeles $50,000.00 a year to operate a Superior Court for the handling of criminal cases. With five more courts operating it would have cost the county an additional $250,000.00 to dispose of its criminal cases.

PUBLIC DEFENDER IN CIVIL CASES.

The Public Defender also has a civil jurisdiction which is hardly less important than his criminal jurisdiction. Under the county charter he is authorized to prosecute actions for the collection of wages and other claims of persons not financially able to employ counsel, in cases where the sum involved does not exceed One Hundred Dollars.

Millions of dollars are spent in the State of California each year in giving indigent persons, the poor, needy and helpless,

great saving of time and expense was effected could be mentioned but it does not seem opportune to include them in this report.

ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF MONEY SAVED THE COUNTY.

During the last fiscal year the Public Defender handled 2,345 criminal cases in the Superior Court. Of these 1805 were set for trial but only 388 cases were actually tried. 885 cases were disposed of without trial. 637 of said trials were disposed of by changing the pleas of defendants from not guilty to guilty. Dismissals were made in 160 cases because it would not have been advantageous to try them and 26 cases were stricken from the calendar. In each of said cases the rights of the defendant were, under the law, fully protected and accorded to him.

But for the work of the Public Defender we are of the opinion that at least 700 of said cases would have been tried. If said 700 cases had gone to trial it would have required five more Superior Courts, assigned to the trial of criminal cases than are now handling such cases, functioning full time, to have tried said cases.

In round figures, it costs the county of Los Angeles $50,000.00 a year to operate a Superior Court for the handling of criminal cases. With five more courts operating it would have cost the county an additional $250,000.00 to dispose of its criminal cases.

PUBLIC DEFENDER IN CIVIL CASES.

The Public Defender also has a civil jurisdiction which is nearly less important than his criminal jurisdiction. Under the county charter he is authorized to prosecute actions for the collection of wages and other claims of persons not financially able to employ counsel, in cases where the sum involved does not exceed One Hundred Dollars.

Millions of dollars are spent in the State of California each year in giving indigent persons, the poor, needy and helpless,

medical aid and hospitalization. This aid is rendered by the state so that said persons may be restored to health and again placed, if possible, in a self-supporting condition.

It is the duty of society to render legal aid to the poor, needy and helpless, in order to straighten out their legal difficulties, secure for them their rights under the law, and redress for their wrongs, so that they may continue to be self-supporting and not become charges of the public welfare departments.

REPORT OF CIVIL CASES

Total number of applications in the office for assistance in both civil and criminal cases - - - - - - - - - - - - -		44,124
Applications in which advice was given on various subjects - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	21,786	
Applications rejected because applicants were able to pay a fee or because the office was without jurisdiction:		
Refused - - - - - 3,633		
Referred to atty- 2,330	5,963	
Cases accepted and handled - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	2,887	

CASES ACCEPTED AND HANDLED

Labor claims -	684
Detention of or injury to personal property- - - - -	631
Illegal attachments and garnishments and other persecution cases - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	732
Miscellaneous accepted cases - - - - - - - - - - - - -	840
	2,887

Money collected and chattels recovered without suit (approx.) - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	$25,980.43
Amount of wages released from illegal garnishment - -	14,379.20
Amount of judgments recovered - - - - - $1,015.20	
Amount collected on judgments - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	600.11
Amount collected on settlements before trial - - - - -	100.88
	$ 41,060.62

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026 with funding from
State of California and California State Library

https://archive.org/details/igsl_annual-report-la-cty-public-def_1933

Suits filed and won	13
Suits filed and lost	1
Suits filed and settled before trial	3
Suits filed and not disposed of	15
	32

Total appearances in court on cases filed and miscellaneous accepted cases - - - - - - - - - -174.

Respectfully submitted,

FREDERIC H. VERCOE

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Suits filed and won - 13

Suits filed and lost - 1

Suits filed and settled before trial - - - - - - - - - - - 3

Suits filed and not disposed of - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 16

33

Total appearances in court on cases filed and miscellaneous accepted cases - - - - - - - - - - 174.

Respectfully submitted,

FREDERIC H. VERCOE

PUBLIC DEFENDER

HIST
HV
695
L7c.r

1932/33

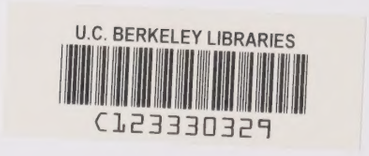
IGSL

University of California, Berkeley
Institute of Governmental Studies
Library

Annual report / Public Defender of Los Angeles County.

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES LIBRARY
109 PHILOSOPHY HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY, CA 94720

HIST
HV
695
L7c.r
1932/33



INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES LIBRARY
109 PHILOSOPHY HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY, CA 94720